

MINUTES

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2012

Present:

Councillors:

Adeleke	Hearn
Bassadone	Mahmood
Clark	Marshall (Chairman)
Conway	Sutton (Vice-Chairman)
Flint	Wixted

Co-Opted Members:

S Parker

Also attended:

Councillor M Griffiths	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor N Harden	Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services
Mrs Rose Kosmalski	Chair, Tenants & Leaseholders Committee

Officers:

Elliott Brooks	Assistant Director, Housing Landlord
David Austin	Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Delivery
Julia Hedger	Group Manager, Strategic Housing
David Gill	Group Manager, Partnerships & Citizen Insight
Julie Still	Group Manager, Resident Services
Jack Burnham	Team Leader, Strategy & Development
Luke de Kretser	Lead Officer, Strategy & Partnerships
Carolyn Leech	Lead Officer, Policy & Participation
Elissa Rospigliosi	Corporate Graduate
Sara Railson	Manager of Old Town Hall
Trudi Coston	Member Support Officer, Democratic Services
Pat Duff	Member Support Officer, Democratic Services

The meeting began at 7:30pm.

The Chairman advised members that the meeting is being recorded to facilitate minute taking.

OS/80/12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 January 2012 and 2 February 2012 were agreed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

OS/81/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors McLean and Adshead. Councillor Wixted substituted for Councillor McLean and Councillor Clark substituted for Councillor Adshead.

OS/82/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman informed the Committee she had been advised by the Solicitor that Members should declare a Personal Interest if they live on any of the roads listed in Item 7 – Verge Hardening Project Update.

No Personal Interests were declared.

OS/83/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

OS/84/12 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO A CALL-IN

None

OS/85/12 EQUALITIES CONSULTATION

Elissa Rospigliosi, Corporate Graduate, introduced the report and said that the Equalities report was an update for Members on a number of pieces of work which have been carried out in response to the Equality Act 2010. The legislation extended protection under the law to a number of groups who had historically suffered discrimination, and placed two specific requirements on public bodies. She said they were asked to publish information in January showing that we had complied with the General Equality Duty and to set ourselves specific, measurable equality objectives, to be published on or before 6 April 2012.

The report proposed that the Council should revise and renew its Equalities Strategy later in 2012, which would involve the development of specific equalities objectives. However, the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to set and publish at least one objective in April of this year. The report therefore proposed the following objectives, which were developed with reference to consultation feedback and to the evidence which is currently held at the Council. Members' comments were invited on the objectives.

The objectives were:

1. Develop a more robust, sophisticated and usable set of equalities data on our service users.
2. Improve inclusion, access to services and opportunities for involvement for all people in Dacorum. To develop a pilot project to address the needs of Deaf residents.
3. Increase the proportion of incidents reported to the Council which are recorded as hate crime or hate related incidents.
4. Develop our consultation base so that it becomes more representative of the community.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Conway referred to paragraph 3.1 of the report and asked for an example of what it meant and how they plan to do it.

E Rospigliosi said an example could be when DBC distribute leaflets with pictures of residents; we should ensure we represent different people, ethnic groups, relationships, family units etc.

Councillor Bassadone referred to paragraph 3.4 of the report, and asked how we would know about incidents if they were not reported to the police.

E Rospigliosi said they may have reported to other services such as Social Services, Hertfordshire Domestic Violence help-line, the National Domestic Violence help-line and other Voluntary help-lines.

Councillor Bassadone said it could be difficult as we would have to wait for someone to make the first move and come forward, and asked how we plan to find those people.

E Rospigliosi said the consultation suggested they make sure we look into all different reporting avenues.

Councillor Bassadone referred to paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the report, and asked how much it would cost to have the consultation with specialist organisations and to have the former Deaf Services Development Officer to work with us.

E Rospigliosi said the Development Officer is working voluntarily and they are looking to find other volunteers that are willing to help and work on behalf of the Community.

Councillor Adeleke asked what the timescale was for the project referred to in paragraph 4.2, and then asked what special efforts they plan to make to ensure we go above and beyond for Deaf people.

E Rospigliosi said the pilot project identified a number of actions that would need to be carried out; we would need to change the way we publicise events and information, make sure access to information was equal and available. Longer term actions would be to ensure we make better use of local Deaf networks to reach out to more people. She said the time scale for the objectives would be developed in more detail over the next six months.

Councillor Marshall referred to paragraph 4 of the report which stated 'the Council is required to set and publish at least one objective in April' and asked if there was one particular objective officers had in mind.

E Rospigliosi said she would like to see DBC adopt all four of the objectives.

Councillor Flint referred to paragraph 4.2, and asked if there is a Voluntary Sector group for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing that they plan to build a partnership with.

E Rospigliosi replied that they have not yet identified a specific Voluntary Sector group but the Development Officer had some previous experience and ideas and had suggested partnership with Herts Sensory services. E Rospigliosi welcomed any suggestions of contacts from the Committee.

Councillor Flint said that we need some actions if we want to adopt these objectives. It would be useful if we found a partner as it would demonstrate we are taking action and it is not just a set of words. She added there are currently lots of people in the refuge suffering Domestic Violence and agreed with Councillor Bassadone that they would only come forward when they are ready to because of what they are experiencing.

Councillor Mahmood suggested we prioritise the objectives so we can focus on the most important ones first.

Councillor Marshall asked for suggestions of priority.

Councillor Mahmood said they are all very useful objectives but felt we should prioritise Deaf people.

Councillor Marshall asked if any other Member of the Committee had any views on priority.

Councillor Hearn said she agreed we should be concentrating on Deaf people as she could not think of any groups in Dacorum that deal with specifically with Deaf people and agreed it should be a priority.

Julie Still said she has details of a Social Club in Dacorum that deal specifically with Deaf people.

Councillor Marshall said there seemed to be a preference for Deaf people but agreed it was a good idea to take all four objectives forward this year.

Councillor Marshall referred to paragraph 3.2 regarding a dedicated Community Centre to support Ethnic and Faith groups. She said she agreed there should be support for various groups, but did not support the idea that these groups should be all in one place.

E Rospigliosi apologised if she made the wording may be unclear but the desire for a Community Centre came from the consultation and it was to provide additional support and interaction for various different groups, and to bring people together.

Councillor Marshall felt it did not make sense to have one specific centre providing for a multiplicity of different groups with different reasons or backgrounds. She agreed there should be facilities to provide for groups to meet at various places but not in one building.

Councillor Bassadone suggested we could speak to Churches Together as they often meet in different areas of Hemel and involve various Faith groups.

Councillor Marshall added that if DBC plan to gather statistics by asking people questions that are not so common, such as their sexuality, we need to make it clear why we are asking that question.

Outcome

The Committee considered and noted the recommendations and agreed to include the revised equalities strategy in the work programme for later in 2012.

OS/86/12 VERGE HARDENING PROJECT UPDATE

Julie Still, Group Manager of Resident Services, introduced the report and informed the Committee that in the last 10 days the Housing Service had contributed a further £100k towards the budget as one of their local offers as it was identified as an issue for their residents. The report now has a list of prioritised areas after completing the first two stages of the process following the previous report that come to the Housing & Community Overview and Scrutiny meeting in November 2011.

J Still welcomed any questions from the Committee.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Marshall asked what the total amount was in the budget.

J Still replied it is now £400k.

Councillor Marshall asked if the increase in budget meant they were able to go above number 26 on the list of prioritised areas.

J Still replied they will aim to go as far as the £400k will cover but doesn't know at this stage how many of the areas would be improved by that budget. J Still explained that there are two further stages to go before the list is finalised. She explained that some areas will not be suitable for additional parking so these will be sieved out again at the next stage and there will be an Enforcement Group and Preventative Group meeting to see what other options there are apart from providing addition parking.

J Still explained that in the final stage, they would need to refer to Hertfordshire County Council for their views and feasibility standards, and then for implementation.

Councillor Marshall asked what the timeline was.

J Still replied that there is a meeting scheduled with Hertfordshire County Council at the beginning of May. She added it would also depend on planning and a wide range of other issues on parking to decide a final date when the project is to be delivered but hopes to be within this coming financial year.

Councillor Marshall asked if it was possible to have a list of the 47 roads that had been removed from the project, and the reasons why they was removed.

J Still confirmed that information was available, and she would email it to the Committee.

Councillor Mahmood said he'd made an observation that the majority of the first 12 prioritised areas fell in Leverstock Green and Gadebridge, and asked if this was a coincidence as there are parking issues in all areas.

J Still replied that the list was prioritised by various agencies, internally and externally to DBC. She explained they had considered view from residents, how parking obstructions had impacted the Waste Collection Services, access for the Fire and Ambulance Service, complaints that had been received, Neighbourhood Wardens, Ward Councillors and disputes that had been brought to the attention of the Police. She said that not everyone had responded to each area so an average was worked out on the returns to make it fair and the result is felt to be a true reflection.

Councillor Bassadone expressed how delighted she was to see Ritcroft Street high on the list as it had caused problems for around many years. She said she has visited the area on several occasions with residents, Elliott Brooks and various other staff members because of the damaged and rough roads and the diabolical parking.

Councillor Marshall asked if the report had been to the Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny meeting yet and asked what they had said.

J Still replied that it had been to that meeting and some questions were asked with regards to additional areas that were not included in time to be assessed at this stage. She added that she had received a large petition from tenants in Brickmakers Lane and Ritcroft Street.

Councillor Flint expressed how pleased she was to see some areas in Gadebridge high on the list. She explained she had experienced problems with one particular area for many years and had suggested it should be a one way street. Parking in this particular road had once obstructed an ambulance from accessing the road and a patient had to be carried down the road to get to the ambulance. Councillor Flint reiterated how pleased she was.

Outcome

That the report be noted.

OS/87/12 OLD TOWN HALL- CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

David Austin introduced the report, explaining how the regeneration of the Old Town is one of the Council's Priorities and said the report set out options for the Committee to consider. The first phase focuses on works to the cellar to make it DDA compliant, and works to the Gallery Bar area as it is inadequate in terms of size and does not cope at interval times. Phase one is estimated to cost around £90,000 to £100,000.

The second phase, which focuses on the Colonnade area, would be a significant investment for the Council. The Council had engaged with a Catering Consultant who has done some initial work with Sara Railson, the Old Town Hall Manager, and the Consultant had suggested now may not be the best time to consider opening the Colonnade area as a cafe but the Committee's views are welcome on this. English Heritage has also expressed some reservations.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Sutton referred to Phase 2 and asked if any designs or plans had been done and put forward or if it is just discussion on what may happen.

D Austin said the Council had engaged a Design Consultant to provide plans on phase one and he had provided some drawings and artist impressions for the second phase, relating to the Colonnades, to give English Heritage an idea of what the area could look like. These will be available for Cabinet at the end of next month.

Councillor Flint asked if English Heritage had indicated any additional costing.

D Austin replied he does not yet have that level of detail but if we had to be more sympathetic to their concerns, costs would have to be increased to cover those concerns.

Councillor Mahmood said that, as there are lots of businesses and busy restaurants in the Old Town, should we not speak to the Local Businesses and ask if they would want to make a contribution to help improve the Old Town?

D Austin replied that it was a good idea and had happened to an extent. He referred to Paragraph 3.4 on page 18 of the agenda and explained James Doe and Chris Taylor's teams had been doing some consultative work on this to ensure local businesses are involved.

Councillor Marshall said she felt the Colonnade area should be deferred until the economic climate improves. She suggested we could think of working with the third sector and not just commercial bodies.

D Austin agreed it is something for consideration but it may not fulfil the objective as far as the officers had envisaged.

Councillor Mahmood asked if some simple coloured lighting outside would be considered to brighten the building and make it stand out more.

S Railson said adding some lighting had been discussed and English Heritage would have to agree to it but it is something to discuss with them.

Outcome

Councillor Harden thanked the Committee for their comments and added that it is currently an open discussion and would take on board all the comments.

OS/88/12 REPORT OF TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER COMMITTEE AND THE WIDER TENANT INVOLVEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Elliott Brooks introduced the report and explained how it was previously presented at the Housing & Community Overview and Scrutiny meeting in January, where it was recommended that more work needed to be done with the TLC, which he said they have now done over the past month.

Carolyn Leech explained that since January's meeting, they had worked closely with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the TLC, the Chair of MFG, Stuart Parker and Mavis Cook, to try and strengthen the proposed report and hoped the 7 recommendations show what they would like to work towards.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Mahmood referred to the Newsletter that was circulated last week and said he had received positive feedback from tenants.

C Leech said they have done lots of work on the News & Views and would like to work towards making things more interactive by using social media to make it easier for tenants and leaseholders to get in touch with them.

Councillor Mahmood asked how they plan to get across to people that are Council Tax payers but not DBC tenants.

C Leech said all publications are on the website and Dacorum Digest and they hope everyone has access to that information should they need it.

Councillor Bassadone referred to recommendation 3 and said there was previously some concern that it may deter people with enthusiasm. She asked if it was possible for people with enthusiasm to be put on sub- committees.

C Leech said it was possible and there had been 1281 people that had expressed interest in being involved in different ways.

Councillor Hearn asked what kind of training would be given and who the provider would be. C Leech said they are currently making a list of the training requirements. They are looking at the groups already in existence, what skills they have already got and what skills are needed. She said officers will draw up a list of trainers and that some of the training could be in house.

Councillor Mahmood asked how long people will be on the Committee for or if they will regularly bring in new members.

C Leech replied they will be working with the TLC for guidance on what would be an appropriate time to serve and building that into plan to give people the opportunity to go and do new things as they develop.

S Parker said the TLC had asked if it could have access to an independent advisor to assist tenants in making sure they are fully informed of all the alternatives on various different subjects.

Councillor Hearn said she felt it was important to include young people.

Councillor Adeleke asked if compensation could be awarded to tenants for their time, as this could be used as an incentive.

C Leech said it was something they can look in to but it had not been needed in the past. Some roles can take up a lot of time and it would be good to look to offer a reward in some way. She said they had their first Tenants Conference last year which was a good opportunity to say thank you to our actively involved tenants and it will be something officers will be investigating.

Councillor Marshall introduced Rose Kosmalski, Chair of TLC, and asked if there was anything she wanted to say about the report.

Rose Kosmalski said the TLC had agreed all the recommendations.

Councillor Marshall added she was pleased to see more work had been done and the scheme for involvement with tenants and leaseholders was much clearer.

Outcome

The Committee agreed the recommendations and will receive an update report in July.

OS/89/12 STRATEGIC TENANCY POLICY

The committee considered the Strategic Tenancy Policy.

Julia Hedger introduced the report and informed the Committee that the documents included in the report are going to the Cabinet next week with any additional comments or amendments made at this meeting. She explained that we have a legal requirement to adopt a Strategic Tenancy Policy by January 2013, as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

J Hedger referred to the diagram on page 41 of the agenda to help the Committee understand where the Strategic Tenancy Policy fits in with other Council Priorities and other existing Policies or Policies that are currently being developed and to give a better understanding of what the policy is and why we are doing it.

J Hedger said that question 5 on page 56 of the report will have to be amended prior to consultation, to comply with the Equalities Act, by removing the reference to a specific age.

J Hedger introduced her team that attended with her; Jack Burnham, Team Leader of Strategy & Development and Luke de Kretser, Lead Officer of Strategy & Partnerships, who is leading on the project.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Bassadone asked two questions; what is DBC and what are DBC? Councillor Bassadone continued to note several instances throughout the report where there was inconsistent and incorrect use of plural and singular verbs and noted other points where the grammar was incorrect. She asked that the document is corrected and made clearer, especially as it is going to be a Strategic document.

J Hedger accepted and noted the suggestions made by Councillor Bassadone and said it would be looked at before the Strategy goes out to consultation. She explained DBC is obliged to issue a Strategic Tenancy Policy because the Council is a stock holding authority. She added that the Council should make recommendations to RSLs but cannot force RSLs to take notice of the Strategic Tenancy Policy and that is where the word 'expect' comes in.

Councillor Bassadone referred to the first bullet point in Dacorum Borough Council's Key Principles: 'The Council will give priority to those in Housing Need and asked what happened to preference for local needs. She said the Council has such a long waiting list of people that would like to be housed here and we need to encourage preference for local people.

J Hedger replied that preference for people with a local connection is in the current Allocations Policy but would look in to making that clearer.

Councillor Bassadone referred to the new five year Flexible Tenancies and asked how the Council would decide if someone was still eligible or not if their income changes, and asked if there was an income limit.

J Hedger responded that is in the detail of the Allocations Policy and details of that nature would be part of the Allocations Policy review.

Following on from Councillor Bassadone's question on preferences for local people, Councillor Marshall suggested the Committee propose to Cabinet that the first Key Principle is changed to: 'The Council will give priority to those in housing need with preference to local people'. She explained she believed it is critical that the Principles, especially the Key Principles, are correct as housing policies and strategies will relate to those principles. She gave as an example the Allocations Policy which will be reviewed in the next few months. The draft before the Committee only made reference to local people as a "further principle" not as part of a "key principle".

The Committee agreed this.

Councillor Mahmood asked who we define as local people.

Councillor Marshall responded that this is defined in the current Allocations Policy and referred to physical location and how long someone had resided in the area.

J Hedger added that this is all detailed in the current Allocations Policy and will be part of the Allocations review. She said the officers understand the importance of giving priority to local people.

Councillor Marshall asked when DBC plan to start issuing Flexible Tenancies.

J Hedger said DBC would not be issuing Flexible Tenancies until a new Housing Allocations Policy is adopted. RSLs can currently offer Flexible Tenancies. She said they have had discussions with a local Housing Association, Affinity Sutton, who is looking to start offering Flexible Tenancies very shortly, so the officers will see how they work.

Councillor Marshall asked for a rough timeline.

L de Kretser replied that it would be at the time the Council is required to adopt the Strategic Tenancy Policy, namely January 2013.

J Hedger said that they plan to consult on this document in June/July before it is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, to be ready for adoption in 2013 or possibly an earlier time if that is agreed by Cabinet.

Councillor Mahmood asked for clarification on the definition of material changes and asked what are classed as material changes. He raised some concerns around the decoration of properties and he felt people would be put off decorating and spending their money on their property if they could have to move out five years later.

J Burnham replied that there is a review process, yet to be written, setting out the timetable of when a Flexible Tenancy would be reviewed. The details of the review would be made clear before someone signed up to a Flexible Tenancy. If there had been no significant material change, the tenancy could be renewed. He explained a material change could be an increase in income.

Councillor Mahmood suggested this could stop someone from progressing financially as it could mean they lose their home. This made him feel uncomfortable with the Policy.

J Burnham said a range of suggestions would be made to a tenant whose flexible tenancy is not being renewed, for example Shared Ownership, 'Right to Buy' or other types of rented accommodation. He said the officers are not proposing someone would have to leave their home because of earning too much money and not be provided with some assistance from the Council. The housing department would look to assist them with other housing options.

Councillor Mahmood said we should ensure this is made clear to give tenants peace of mind.

Councillor Adeleke referred to question 7 on page 56 and asked if we should give priority to someone if they were in employment as it appeared to him to be contra to equal opportunities.

J Hedger said it is recommended that councils should consider this option.

S Parker said he had some reservations about Flexible Tenancies. He said the Government suggest they want us to improve ourselves, they are offering a better 'Right to Buy' scheme in the future, and they would like tenants to work and better themselves. He felt that by comparing ourselves to local Housing Associations, one of which he said does not have a good reputation in the local area, made him think we should distance ourselves from doing similar to them. He said if people had a choice between a Council property and a Housing Association property, he believed people would definitely prefer to have a Council property. He said if he was a new tenant on a Flexible Tenancy and he had a good job which paid well and had invested lots of money and effort into his home, he would consider handing his notice in to his workplace so that when the flexible tenancy comes up for renewal, he would not lose the property. He felt it would not attract the right sort of people as the policy would work against those who wish to improve themselves.

L de Kretser replied that the points relating to income would relate to the Allocations Policy and will be reviewed in a different report. He said the work that is being done suggests that a large amount of Flexible Tenancies will be automatically renewed if circumstances had not changed significantly. He said he had spoken to Family Mosaic, who are a large Housing Association offering Flexible Tenancies, and they said 90% of their tenancies would automatically be renewed after the five years had come to an end. He said the officers presume flexible tenancies will be renewed unless something from specific set criteria had changed.

S Parker said he still felt doubt. He said that it would be hanging over tenants' heads that they could lose their home with children consequently having to change schools.

J Hedger said she understood Mr Parker's concerns and said it is one of the key considerations that will be looked at in the Allocations Policy review process. It will be made clear to all new tenants what they are signing up to. She said there is not enough Council housing to go around to everyone who needs it and that is why we have such a long waiting list. There are currently secure tenants under occupying very large properties for various

different reasons and there are families in desperate need of those properties. She felt this could give DBC the ability in the future to take a large property back when it was no longer needed and offer a different property that is better suited to that person's requirements. We need to be making best use of our stock.

Councillor Marshall asked why an amount of five years was chosen as opposed to any other amount of years. The Consultation failed to give any reasoning why this amount of time was chosen as opposed to any other number of years. No evidence had been provided in the Consultation to support the suggestion that five years is appropriate and said the Consultation paper must provide the reasoning behind that recommendation.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 51 of the report where it was suggested that existing tenants would not be consulted. She felt Flexible Tenancies could make neighbourhoods unsettled with the turnover of tenants, which is of interest to existing tenants and consequently she felt they should also be consulted.

Councillor Marshall referred to J Hedger's previous comment that suggested if a tenancy came up for review and the tenants were in a property which was too large for them, they would be offered another property that better suited their needs. Councillor Marshall said that would not happen if the tenant's income had increased.

J Hedger said the income threshold is yet to be decided and they would be looking at a serious increase of income. If an income changed significantly, the Housing Department would look at other housing options for them. She added that she would amend the consultation paper to give the reasoning why five years was chosen for Flexible Tenancies prior to the Policy going to Cabinet next week.

L de Kretser said they plan to consult prospective tenants and transfer tenants and will also be consulting existing tenants. He said the officers had already spoken to the TLC, and will be going out with the Housing Landlord team next week with a couple of the questions from the consultation to speak to tenants and the wider public.

Councillor Flint said she had found it hard to get her head around Flexible Tenancies but is aware of under occupied properties in her ward of Gadebridge and understood why we needed to work on that issue. She added that there is a lack of sheltered accommodation in Gadebridge; there are only 10 bungalows so this may deter the elderly from moving out of their home if they wished to stay in Gadebridge.

Councillor Flint said she felt that once Flexible Tenancies are mentioned, people would be scared it will apply to all tenants so it needs to be made clear that it is new tenants only. She agreed with Councillor Marshall's earlier comment that it would affect neighbourhoods and also schools, community centres etc and felt it could impact badly on communities.

J Hedger said they will be sending out a strong message that it would not apply to existing tenants and they will be working with the Housing Landlord team closely to ensure existing tenants understand.

S Parker suggested that DBC links up with other local areas such as Watford or Aylesbury Vale in case a tenant wanted to move out of the area or someone out of the area wanted to move into Dacorum.

J Hedger said that would be part of the Mutual Exchange Policy and details of that will come at a later date.

Councillor Marshall referred to paragraph 2.7 of the Strategic Tenancy Policy, on page 65 of the agenda, where it is stated 'tenants will not be offered another Flexible Tenancy'. She said the wording would need to be amended as it conflicts with paragraph 2.6.

L de Kretser said in paragraph 2.6 it is stated 'if a tenant's circumstances have not changed, then they may still be awarded another Flexible Tenancy in their current property, or they may be offered a tenancy of another property'. He reiterated that they would expect the majority of tenancies to be renewed because tenants' circumstances had not changed.

Councillor Marshall reiterated her previous comment that the wording needed to be changed slightly as the two paragraphs conflicted.

J Hedger said they will clarify that point and will circulate a revised Strategy to the Committee.

Councillor Marshall asked Councillor Mrs Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing, if the Consultation and Strategy was supported by herself, the Cabinet and Council as the documents only states DBC officers.

Councillor Griffiths replied that she fully supports the documents but they had not yet been to Cabinet. Once they had been to Cabinet next week, the wording would be changed. Councillor Marshall explained that the Consultation and Strategy documents were drafts and that therefore it would be assumed the final wording had been used in those drafts.

Outcome

The Committee agreed that the Housing Principles, Consultation Paper and Strategic Tenancy Policy be recommended to Cabinet provided that the Committee's comments and amendments are taken into account.

OS/90/12 COMMUNITY ALARM CALL RESPONSE PERFORMANCE

Elliott Brooks gave an update on the performance report. He said this is the most recent update report and these reports will come every other meeting. He said he hoped the statistics were clear and welcomed any questions from the Committee.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Bassadone referred to the calls performance table on page 71 of the report and sought clarification as she could not work out how the figures add up for 'Number of calls answered within 1 minute', 'Number of calls answered within 3 minutes' and 'Total volume of calls per week'.

E Brooks said the difference could be calls that did not get answered within 3 minutes, or were unanswered.

Councillor Bassadone suggested another column is added to the table for unanswered calls. E Brooks agreed he would add another column for this.

S Parker asked why the calls were not being answered and the reasons why. He said it could have been a life threatening call that had missed and suggested we monitor this.

Councillor Marshall asked if this could be done for all future reports.

E Brooks agreed.

Councillor Sutton referred to page 72 of the report and asked if the Customer Satisfaction Survey was one of our own surveys (DBC) or Eldercare.

E Brooks replied it was DBC's survey.

Outcome

That the report be noted.

OS/91/12 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the work programme and made the following amendments;

May 2012

1. Safety Measures & Support for Tenants in Sheltered Accommodation- Andy Vincent/ Dharini Chandarana.

June 2012

2. Community Alarm Call Response Performance – Andy Vincent/ Dharini Chandarana.
3. Outstanding Internal Audit recommendations on Licensing

July 2012

Progress report on Tenant and Leaseholder involvement – Carolyn Leech
Future of supported housing – Andy Vincent/Dharini Chandarana

September 2012

4. Remove Old Town Hall report

January 2013

Equalities Strategy

Other items pending for possibly May, June or July meetings:

Review of working with housing associations
Brief Report on different types of affordable housing
Various reports from Strategic Housing

The meeting ended at 9:20pm.